

V. SNAKE RIVER BOTTOMS

The Snake River winds through the county on a generally northeast to southwest direction for approximately 70 miles. The riparian area, commonly known as river bottoms, consists of variable terrain elevations and density of undergrowth. The band of undergrowth may vary from none to a mile wide in some locations. It has become a very popular trend to locate homes along the river wherever land can be obtained.

Even though Bingham County has subscribed to the National Flood Insurance Program, and has ordinances in place to govern construction of homes in these areas, a large number of homes have been built along the river in these wooded areas. The tendency has been to construct in the most dense parts of the river bottoms, increasing the risk to the homeowner from wild fires. As the homes are scattered all along the river, there will be no opportunity to work with homeowners associations in addressing the risks. Mitigation efforts will have to be performed on an individual basis.

In years of normal precipitation, the river bottom area is not at risk because of the sub-water levels. However, in years of drought, the vegetation becomes very dry and flammable, creating conditions for uncontrollable fires.

The Snake River Bottoms will be serviced by the Blackfoot Fire District, which includes the Rockford/Springfield Fire Department.

MITIGATION ACTIONS

1. A program of fire-wise education will need to be conducted on an individual, house-to-house basis. This situation would be a good candidate for the application of the Red Zone program.
2. Educational literature will need to be distributed to each home. In some cases, it will need to be hand delivered to each house and perhaps, left on the door handle.
3. This area-at-risk, as well as others may merit a re-evaluation of the local building code and permitting process. This action could determine if fire-safety construction requirements should be placed on homes being constructed in high-risk areas.